Tourism, Culture and Recreation
May 26, 2008

Province Experiencing Banner Iceberg Season

It is shaping up to be a banner year for icebergs in Newfoundland and Labrador, with early counts indicating it will be the best iceberg season in almost 10 years.

The International Ice Patrol (IIP) reports that more than 900 icebergs have been counted off Newfoundland and Labrador this year – and the number could easily exceed 1,000 this season. The province has not seen more than 1,000 icebergs since 1998 when, in an extraordinary year, 1,384 were reported.

The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, said icebergs are among this province's most popular natural attractions.

"Inquiries to our tourism website indicate that potential visitors from throughout Canada and the world are fascinated by icebergs," Minister Jackman said. "In fact, the word 'iceberg' is second only to the word 'Newfoundland' in bringing internet searchers to our tourism website."

Minister Jackman said staff at the province's Visitor Information Centres report that inquiries about icebergs – and where they can be seen – are among visitors' most frequently asked questions.

"The promotion of icebergs, as one of our unique natural wonders, has been part of tourism marketing in Newfoundland and Labrador for at least 25 years," the minister said. "They are a popular element of our tourism experience, along with other natural attractions such as dramatic scenery, whales, birds and other wildlife."

Lieutenant Bill Woityra, operations officer with the International Ice Patrol, said that since 1900, there have been only 15 years when the iceberg count has exceeded 1,000.

"We've also had more icebergs in 2008 than in the last four years combined," Lieut. Woityra said. "And, with more than 900 thus far, we are already in the 'Top 20' dating back 108 years."

The province's tourism website, www.newfoundlandandlabrador.com, features a separate section on icebergs. The Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation is also a partner in the IcebergFinder.com website (www.icebergfinder.com), along with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (HNL), C-CORE (Memorial University), and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Canadian Space Agency, the European Space Agency and Polar View. The website, launched in 2006, illustrates the location of icebergs along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador using real-time satellite radar data.

- 30 -

Media contact:
Heather May
Director of Communications
Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
709-729-0928, 697-5061
heathermay@gov.nl.ca

2008 05 26 10:10 a.m.